THE EIGHTH DAY.

20th February 1913.

SUBJECTS.

The Assembly met again at 11 A. M. on Thursday, the 20th February 1913.

By the direction of the Dewan, the Chief Secretary to the Government read the following announcement:—

"With reference to the representations made on the subject of ferry charges, I am directed to say that action will be taken to abolish these charges, all over the State, with effect from the 1st Chingom 1089. The Government have been influenced by the present satisfactory condition of the finances in resolving to grant this relief. They wish it, however, to be distinctly understood that, should the condition of the finances at any future time need it, they reserve to themselves the right to re-impose the charges, as provided by law."

The consideration of the subjects was then resumed.

115. The attitude of the Government towards the Vernaculars of the State and their responsibility in regard to the same.

Mr. K. Raman Tampi (Member, Vilavancode taluk) regretted to observe that the Vernaculars of the State had not been receiving sufficient consideration at the hands of the Government in recent years. The growth of a nation depended, to a large extent, on the growth of its language. Travancore as a whole was not backward in point of education, when compared with other countries; but it must be said to be backward in regard to Vernacular education. The provisions of the Education Code were mainly wholesome as far as Secondary education was concerned; but the Code dealt the death-blow to Vernacular education. The Malayalam language was now in its infancy and contained, it must be admitted, a much smaller literature than Tamil. That was the very reason why means should be adopted early for its development. The Vernacular Higher Examination was abolished, and with it, such subjects as Elementary Physics, Chemistry and Geometry were removed from the syllabus for the Vernacular schools. The present Elementary School Leaving Certificate Examination was decidedly of an inferior standard to the old Vernacular Higher Examination. In the present Class VII, it was not possible to teach the works of standard authors. Therefore, two more classes should be introduced into the Elementary curriculum and English also taught as a second language in these schools. Those were exactly the proposals of the Education Committee also. He thought that, even an examination of a higher standard like the *Vidwan Pareeksha* without regular school course, would, in some respects, meet the situation. The decay of the language was indeed real, and it might with certainty be asserted that one of the chief causes which led to it was the abolition of the Vernacular Higher Examination. There was now no

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

SUBJECTS.

demand for books of high standard in schools. Such a demand would have induced writers of books to produce good works at least from a mercenary motive and the language would thus become enriched. The Government should therefore afford sufficient facilities to the writers of books in Malayalam. There was at present no good Malayalam Library anywhere in the State and the want of it also acted as an impedient to the growth of the language.

Dewan.—I fear that the real difficulty is that Malayalam has not a strong literature of its own and the people are not putting forth their best endeavours to make it strong. That will be evident if you examine the state of matters elsewhere in regard to other languages. Take, for instance, Tamil. In the adjoining British Districts, we have not what you call here a Higher Grade Elementary School. The Tamil language is taught there only in the first four classes. The moment you pass that stage, it becomes a second language and it plays a comparatively small part in the curriculum, so much so that most of the scholars you find there today read Tamil and cultivated a knowledge of it long after leaving College. It does not pay for a student in the University to work up Tamil. With all that, has not Tamil made so much progress there? That is because there are a large number of private people writing Tamil books, collecting Tamil literature and editing them. Why don't you organise and do things like that?

The Member said that it was possible here only if the Government also afforded much help. He requested that the development of Vernacular education and Vernacular literature should receive the early attention of the Government and submitted the following suggestions for consideration:—

(1) The Vernacular Higher Examination should be revived, or at least a Special Examination of a higher standard than the present one, should be newly introduced. Those who passed the examination should be appointed as teachers and should be preferred for appointments in the Elementary School Inspectors' offices and in other offices where Malayalam correspondence obtained.

(2) In appointing Malayalam Pandits, preference should be given to persons whose mother tongue was Malayalam.

(3) One well-versed in the Vernaculars of the State and in English should be appointed Director of Elementary Schools.

(4) Elementary education should be made compulsory, and rudiments of knowledge in English also imparted in the Elementary Schools.

(5) The Inspectors of Schools should be asked to co-operate with, and afford better treatment to, the teacher-members for the satisfactory working of the Education Boards.

(6) A Curator's department should be organised for the publication of old and good Malayalam *granthas*—procurable

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

SUBJECTS.

throughout Travancore—and for the compilation of an English—Malayalam Dictionary and also a Malayalam Dictionary.

(7) More members, who had sound knowledge in Malayalam, should be appointed in the Text Book Committee. Those outside the Education Department should also be put in, as in the case of the University Board of Studies. The prices of books prescribed by the Text Book Committee should be better regulated.

(8) More of Malayalam books should be collected in the Public Library and a catalogue of all Malayalam books in the Library issued to the public for their information.

(9) The Government should appoint a man proficient in Sanskrit, English, Tamil and Malayalam for translating good books from the first three languages into Malayalam.

(10) The Government should undertake the correct printing of such standard works as the Ramayana &c.

(11) The Government should set apart a definite amount annually and distribute the same as honorarium to the authors of the best books published during the year, in consultation with the Adviser to the Government in matters relating to Vernacular literature.

(12) Some of the Literary Associations of the State, such as 'the Bhasha Poshini Sabha', should be allowed to return a Member to the Popular Assembly to represent the wants in regard to literary matters.

(13) A Committee should be appointed to draw up a scheme of Vernacular education on the lines above indicated.

The Dewan then invited the opinions of a few of the other Members on the question.

Mr. N. Padmanabha Pillai (Member, Karunagappalli taluk).—The present system of Malayalam education is not conducive to the development of the language and it requires modification. I have not thought out the details. But the feeling is universal.

Mr. V. S. Krishna Pillai (Member, Thiruvalla taluk).—The feeling is that the Malayalam language is not being treated properly. It is being treated with contempt. The Vernacular Higher Examination has been stopped. At the time when that was in existence, the language was improving better. That test should be revived. Other changes are also required. We shall draw up a scheme and submit it for the consideration of the Government.

Mr. P. M. Chacko, B. A. (Member, Kottayam taluk).—Vernacular education is not made compulsory in the Secondary Schools. It should be declared so.

Dewan.—It does not appear fair to make it compulsory.

Mr. P. M. Chacko, B. A.—From Form IV upwards, it is not compulsory.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

SUBJECTS.

Dewan.—It is not compulsory elsewhere. I fear a change like that will upset the whole arrangement.

Mr. K. M. Mammen Mappila (Member, T. I. C., Thiruvalla).—The bulk of people know only Malayalam. I think it necessary to have two higher classes in the Elementary Schools. That alone will spread education to the majority. In the present condition of things, it is not possible for every one to prosecute English education.

Mr. N. Kumaran Asan (Member, Nominated).—The old Vernacular Higher Examination should be revived. The text-books prescribed for that examination when it existed were of the standard prescribed for the B. A. Degree. The men who passed that test are some of the best Malayalam scholars we have now. One or two more classes should also be opened.

Dewan's reply.—A committee will be appointed to enquire into and report on the whole question.

116. The desirability of starting Technical Schools in important centres of the State.

Mr. V. S. Krishna Pillai (Member, Thiruvalla taluk) said that the importance of Technical education being admitted on all hands, it was not necessary to dwell at length on its imperative need in the State. Technical education was of vital importance to the poverty stricken people of the country. The subject had been, of late, taken up earnestly by the Government of India and the leaders of thought among the British Indians. It was therefore to be regretted that there was no move in that direction in the State. The people of Travancore had to depend for their subsistence entirely on the scanty bounty of unassisted nature and also on Government appointments. Though the Administration Report of 1087 made mention of 13 Technical Schools in the State, it would not be disputed that not one of them was worthy of the name. The Member was of opinion that, in the present state of affairs, the Government could not remain quiet. The people of the country would not move in any direction unless they were made to move. The masses did not understand the value of Technical education and could not be expected to come forward and start schools themselves. It was for the Government to extend that helping hand to the blind public. The starting of Technical Schools was all the more necessary at present in view to the circumstance that a vast number of young men were left adrift without any chance of prospects by the stringent rules of the Education Code. The pure "granted" certificate holders could not seek Government employment. Very often, many of them had no chances of admission to the College also. Many of those who had failed in the examination were unable to continue their studies. All such men would have an opportunity to work for their own benefit and the benefit of the country, if Technical Schools were started in all the important centres of the State, at least one in each of the four Revenue Divisions. He therefore requested that the Government might be pleased to give the question the attention that it deserved.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly